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“Much More than just another Private Collection”: The Schocken Library and its Rescue from Nazi Germany in 1935

Abstract: This article reconstructs for the first time the rescue of the Schocken Library, one of the largest privately owned book collections, from Nazi Germany. The library consisted of over 60,000 volumes of rare and precious Hebrew and German books, manuscripts, and incunabula. The books were shipped from Germany to Mandate Palestine in the years 1934–1937 and the library is one of the few collections that completely survived National Socialist destruction and looting. The case of the Schocken library can help us understand all of the many challenges involved in successfully relocating a library of its size. Without a network of professionals, experience dealing with authorities and unlimited funds, an operation like the shipment of the Schocken library would not have been possible. The second part of the paper focuses on how, once the library was in Jerusalem, the way in which it was perceived changed. From the contemporary perspective of the owner, the merchant and publisher Salman Schocken, and from the perspective of its users and visitors, the library was perceived as a place of continuity in exile rather than as a place of saved books. The micro-historical perspective not only allows us to understand how historical subjects interpret the world around them but also how they try to influence historical processes.

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I. Introduction

Out of the desire of a Jew to have in his home a well-preserved copy of each of the standard works of Jewish tradition and literature grew, little by little, a collection which at first stressed first editions, rare and early prints and incunabula. It then became the collector's major object to trace the history of the Jewish people as manifested in and by its books.¹

¹ From Salman Schocken's introduction to the first volume for the studies of the Research Institute of Medieval Hebrew Poetry, 1933, Schocken Archive Jerusalem (henceforth SchA), 871/9. The archive is located in the Schocken Institute at Balfour Street 6, Jerusalem.

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Out of this desire, as Schocken puts it, grew one of the largest and most valuable private libraries in Germany. An unpublished article on the library (1939) states: “[...] This library is much more than just another private collection. It is a kaleidoscope of the spiritual contributions of Judaism in the past and in the present, as well as a display of the choicest goods from almost every nation in the world.”²

On December 1, 1935, the Schocken library arrived at the port of Haifa in 164³ wooden crates.⁴ These crates, which were filled with “old and used books”⁵ worth RM 250,000,⁶ had left Germany at the end of October. Each book was carefully wrapped in soft paper and then packed in custom-made wooden boxes with oilpaper lining. Elise Pelz⁷ took all the necessary measures to prevent any damage to one of the most valuable private libraries in Germany. Some of the books had left Germany earlier in separate shipments, and the most valuable ones waited in Swiss bank vaults⁸ for their journey. All of them eventually found a new home in the newly built Schocken Library (1936) in Jerusalem.

This paper spans two fields of research: (I) the rescue of German-Jewish cultural property, and (II) cultural transfer.

(I) The private library of Salman⁹ Schocken consisted of hundreds of manuscripts, a Hebrew incunabula collection,¹⁰ and more than 60,000 volumes, among them first editions and unique research material.¹¹ By taking his entire library along with him to Palestine, Salman Schocken saved centuries-old Ju-

2 There is only one typewritten copy of this article, and it does not indicate an author. In the same archive box, however, there is a German draft of the text that is signed “Hartmann.” Frederik Hartmann was at this time Research Fellow at the Hebrew University, and it is thus likely that he is, in fact, the author. SchA 871/9.

3 Exportvaluta-Erklärung, 12 October 1935, SchA 871/52.

4 Hans Romann to Ernst Cohn and Elise Pelz, 1 December 1935, SchA 871/52.

5 Exportvaluta-Erklärung, 12 October 1935, SchA 871/52.

6 See Güter-Police, Bleichröder & Co. Hamburg, 11 October 1935, SchA 871/52.

7 Elise Pelz was an employee of the central office of the Schocken Konzern in Zwickau.

8 Bibliothek und Sammlung Verwaltung, SchA 871/72.

9 There are variations in the spelling of his first name: in his youth Schocken himself spelled it “Salmann”; later he changed it to “Salman.” With the exception of direct quotes, I opt for the latter version.

10 In 1931 Schocken donated 64 Hebrew incunabula to the Jewish National Library. See Silke Schaeper, “S’ridei Schocken – ‘Einbandfragmente’ of Hebrew Incunabula at the Schocken Institute for Jewish Research,” in *Jewish Studies at the Turn of the 20th Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJIS Congress Toledo 1998*, eds. Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Sáenz-Badillos (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), 1:627–635; Gershom Schocken, “Salman Schocken: Ich werde Seinesgleichen nicht mehr sehen,” *Der Monat* 20, no. 242 (1968): 13–30, 15; Evelyn Adunka, *Der Raub der Bücher: Plünderungen in der NS-Zeit und Restitution nach 1945* (Wien: Czernin Verlag, 2002).

11 The complete list of 1935 can be found in SchA 871/52.

daic religious, literary, and poetic texts, modern manuscripts, and smaller complete libraries of contemporary writers¹² from certain destruction in Germany. After the Nazis seized power, the expropriation and destruction of Jewish cultural property was, as Elisabeth Gallas has shown in her study on cultural restitution after 1945, a systematically planned campaign of the Nazi government, often encouraged by leading officials.¹³ Dov Schidorsky has estimated that about four million volumes of Judaica and Hebraica throughout Europe were affected by the war; half of these, about two million books, are thought to have been destroyed.¹⁴ These estimates do not include smaller private collections, which are difficult to quantify. Markus Kirchoff therefore concludes that Schidorsky's figure must be considered a conservative estimate.¹⁵ In recent years, the plundering of Jewish (cultural) property by the Nazi regime as well as questions of restitution have been addressed in a number of research projects and publications. The research of Gallas and others¹⁶ has dealt with the efforts to rescue Jewish cultural property and libraries after 1945.

However, the case of the Schocken library is somewhat different: the library was not rescued after the Holocaust but prior to it, and this was a salvage operation carried out before the individuals involved could have known that the book collections would either be destroyed or looted. For this reason,

12 In 1938, after three years of negotiations, Salman Schocken bought the library of Karl Wolfskehl. See Tomke Hinrichs, "Fluchthilfe: Der Ankauf der Bibliothek von Karl Wolfskehl durch Salman Schocken," *Medaon – Magazin für jüdisches Leben in der Forschung und Bildung* 13 (2013): 1–4.

13 See Elisabeth Gallas, "Das Leichenhaus der Bücher": Kulturrestitution und jüdisches Geschichtsdenken nach 1945 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 30–36.

14 Dov Schidorsky, "Das Schicksal jüdischer Bibliotheken im Dritten Reich," in *Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus*, eds. Peter Vodosek and Manfred Komorowsky (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1992), 189–222; 190–191; 210. Schidorsky's estimates are based on: The Research Staff of the Commission of European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries," supplement, *Jewish Social Studies* 8 (1946): 1–103.

15 Markus Kirchoff, "Looted Texts: Restituting Jewish Libraries," in *Restitution and Memory: Material Restoration in Europe*, eds. Dan Diner and Gotthart Wunberg (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 161–188, 165.

16 *Raub und Restitution: 'Arisierung' und Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in Europa*, eds. Constantin Goscshler and Philipp Ther (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003); *Restitution and Memory*, eds. Diner and Wunberg. In *Restitution and Memory* see especially the contribution of Markus Imhof, "Looted Texts: Restituting Jewish Libraries," 161–188. In 2008/2009 The Jewish Museum of Berlin, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum of Frankfurt am Main dedicated the exhibition "Looting and Restitution: Jewish-Owned Cultural Artefacts from 1933 to the Present" to the subject. See the catalogue: *Raub und Restitution: Kulturgut aus jüdischem Besitz von 1933 bis heute*, eds. Inka Bertz and Michael Dormann (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2008).

the Schocken library is still one of the most important libraries of Judaica, which was built up in pre-Nazi Germany and has survived in its entirety. Nevertheless, the academic research on its history is sketchy. In the 1950s, when the extent to which the National Socialist era had destroyed Jewish life in Europe became clear, several short articles were published on the value of the library.¹⁷ In recent years, however, only one article has dealt with the collection.¹⁸ No published articles have yet examined the library's history, and the details concerning the shipment of the books to Palestine, i.e., the actual rescue, have remained unclear. In the first section of this paper I seek to shed light on this rescue operation, which was perhaps one of the most extensive book salvages during the National Socialist period. While this section is primarily descriptive in nature, it sheds light on the various actors, individuals and institutions that were involved in the salvage process, and on the strategies they employed to overcome obstacles put in place by the Nazi regime.

(II) The library itself meant different things to the contemporary actors involved in the shipment of the books, to Schocken himself, and to its early visitors and users. A close reading of the sources reveals that the library was perceived not as a place of rescued books but rather as a place of continuity in exile. The editors of the publication *Dinge des Exils [Things of Exile]* point out “that things make the world comfortable and homelike [...]”¹⁹ Therefore, things that are rescued and exiled along with their owner can confer a sense of home – beyond the actual territorial or political locality. However, since these things are removed from their initial context, they, at the same time, represent alienation and loss.²⁰

Many German-Jewish emigrants and refugees held on to their book collections when they left Germany after the Nazis' rise to power.²¹ One can still find remnants of these private libraries in Israel's antiquarian bookshops today. These rescued books played, as Caroline Jessen points out, an important role for the emigrants:

¹⁷ A collection of published and unpublished articles can be found in SchA 871/9.

¹⁸ Silke Schaeper, “Bibliophilie als kultureller Auftrag: Die Geschichte der Schockenbibliothek,” in *Der Schocken-Verlag/Berlin: Jüdische Selbstbehauptung in Deutschland 1931–1938*, eds. Saskia Schreuder and Claude Weber (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 347–360.

¹⁹ Doerte Bischoff and Joachim Schlör, “Dinge des Exils: Zur Einleitung,” *Exilforschung: Ein internationales Jahrbuch* 31 (2013): 9–20, 13.

²⁰ Ibid., 15.

²¹ The history of book collections that were transferred from Germany to Mandate-era Palestine and Israel was the topic of a panel at the 46th Association for Jewish Studies Conference in Baltimore, MD, December 14–16, 2014, organized by Caroline Jessen, Elisabeth Gallas and the author of this paper.

Die nicht in Deutschland zurückgelassenen, geretteten Bücher bekräftigen die Kontinuität der Biografie ihrer Besitzer über die Bruchstelle der Emigration hinweg: Sie ermöglichen die Re-Lektüre vertrauter literarischer Werke [...], waren als Erbstücke oder Geschenk aber auch Teil der Familiengeschichte. Sie bargen langfristige Erinnerungen, die es festzuhalten galt.²²

Indeed, Schocken's library became a home to the German-speaking emigrants in Jerusalem. Scholars like Gershom Scholem and writers such as S.Y. Agnon used the library regularly, and numerous academic lectures, discussion evenings and readings were held in the grand hall on the first floor.²³

The second section of this essay deals with the changing perception of the library collections once they arrived in Jerusalem. The micro-historical perspective of this case study allows us to understand how historical subjects interpret the world around them, but also how they try to influence historical processes. By focusing on historical actors²⁴ who act, think and suffer, the strategies they employed to deal with the ruptures of forced migration become apparent. Following the concept of *Lebenswelt*,²⁵ we may view the actor as someone who seeks to create meaning within the communicative net of objective structures, society and the individual. Jürgen Habermas emphasized the tension between actor and external influences. According to him, the "life-world" is constructed of culture, society and individuals.²⁶ For the purpose of historical analysis, one needs to add political and legal conditions to this set of structural components.

²² Caroline Jessen, "Das problematische Bild der geretteten Kultur – Büchersammlungen deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer in Israel," *Deutsche(s) in Palästina und Israel: Alltag, Kultur, Politik, Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 41 (2013): 179–194, 179.

²³ See SchA 842/21; 22; 23; 25; 3.

²⁴ See Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1995).

²⁵ This concept originated in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl and was later developed in the work of the sociologist Alfred Schütz. It was adapted for use in the field of history by Rudolf Vierhaus and Heiko Haumann. Rudolf Vierhaus, "Die Rekonstruktion historischer Lebenswelten: Probleme moderner Kulturgeschichtsschreibung," in *Wege zu einer neuen Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1995): 5–28; Heiko Haumann, "Lebensweltlich orientierte Geschichtsschreibung in den Jüdischen Studien: Das Basler Beispiel," in *Jüdische Studien: Reflexionen und Praxis eines wissenschaftlichen Feldes*, ed. Klaus Hödl (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2003): 105–122; Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2003 [1975]). For a more extensive account of the concept's development across academic disciplines, see Stefanie Mahrer, *Handwerk der Moderne: Jüdische Uhrmacher und Uhrenunternehmer im Neuenburger Jura 1800–1914* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 22–30.

²⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns: Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, 1st ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1981), 2:209.

II. The rescue operation

The wooden crates that contained the largest part of Salman Schocken's library left the port of Hamburg on October 21, 1935, on board the steamer *Isenloh*.²⁷ Forty days later, on a gray rainy day,²⁸ they were offloaded in Haifa. The shipment had been meticulously organized and the planning took a little over a year – and, if we consider the emigration of Salman Schocken in late 1933 as the starting point, even longer.

Salman Schocken left Germany in December 1933 together with his wife Lilly and three of his five children.²⁹ His eldest son Gustav³⁰ remained in England to continue his studies and Theodor, his second oldest son, stayed in Germany to deal with his father's businesses.³¹ The Schocken family did not make a hasty departure, but neither was it a well-planned emigration – nothing was to make the German authorities suspicious, as too much was at stake. An estimated 37,000 Jews left Germany in 1933 (more than in any other single year). With the anti-Jewish laws of April 1933,³² many professionals lost their positions and were forced to emigrate, while others faced personal danger as a result of their political activities. As Werner Rosenstock points out, only a few wealthy families left Germany in the early years of the Nazi regime because they clung to their assets and were loath to give up their comfortable life.³³ Schocken was one of the wealthiest businessmen of his time; his chain of warehouses was highly profitable³⁴ and still growing, as was his publishing house in Berlin.³⁵ After spending some time in Switzerland, the family eventually boarded a ship bound for Palestine, and settled in Jerusalem in late January 1934.³⁶ In leaving Germany, however, Schocken did not abandon any of his enterprises or perso-

²⁷ Bleichröder & Co. to Schocken, 28 October 1935, SchA 871/52.

²⁸ Express Service, Haifa to Schocken Office Jerusalem, 26 December 1935, SchA 871/52.

²⁹ Schocken officially gave up his German residency on 11 December 1933. Schocken toDEVi-senbewirtschaftungsstelle Leipzig, 23 Mai 1934, SchA 835/3.

³⁰ Upon his immigration to Palestine, Gustav changed his name to Gershom.

³¹ Dvora Schocken, personal interview, 11 November 2013.

³² “Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums” (Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service).

³³ Werner Rosenstock, “Exodus 1933–1939: A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book I* (1956): 373–390; 378.

³⁴ On the Schocken department stores, see Konrad Fuchs, *Ein Konzern aus Sachsen: Das Kaufhaus Schocken als Spiegelbild deutscher Wirtschaft und Politik 1901 bis 1953* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1990).

³⁵ On the *Schocken Verlag Berlin* see Volker Dahm, *Das jüdische Buch im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1979).

³⁶ All dates according to SchA 833 (Reisen).

nal property. Whereas others, like his friend, and the architect of his house Erich Mendelsohn, lost everything upon leaving Germany,³⁷ Schocken saw to it that his businesses continued to operate and kept his private houses under surveillance.

The Mendelsohn family too left Germany without much preparation, but unlike the Schocken family, they left all their property behind. Mendelsohn was not only Jewish but also under suspicion of being a communist, due to the fact that in 1925 the Soviets had commissioned him to serve as the architect of a textile center close to Leningrad (today's Saint Petersburg).³⁸ The constant fear and disappointment upon hearing close friends openly expressing their sympathy with the Nazi government gave Louise Mendelsohn "the feeling of living among enemies."³⁹ The Mendelsohns felt they had no one left they could trust. Other than the suitcases they took with them, they left everything behind. "It's hard to describe my feelings," Louise writes, "on leaving our cherished and beloved house. I can only say that I was not at all unhappy to leave everything behind. An entire period of our lives had come to an end; a new one would start, unburdened by possessions, relying only on ourselves."⁴⁰

German Jews reacted to the threat posed by the election of Hitler as chancellor and the growing presence of anti-Semitism in society in different ways; some decided to leave soon after the elections, others waited, and yet others stayed. Prior to the ban on emigration imposed on October 23, 1941, some 300,000 Jews left Germany.⁴¹ Personal circumstances influenced decision making in these difficult and dangerous years. The case of Salman Schocken is not representative of the majority of German Jews, however it underscores what one needed to be able to save one's possessions: wealth, experience, knowledge and professional management. In addition, Schocken himself was a man who believed in himself, in structures and in solutions to problems. Louise Mendelsohn remembers his reaction to her expressions of worry and fear when they met in Antibes in mid-February 1933:⁴² "Don't worry," he said, "of course there'll be anti-Semitism and certainly Eric won't be able to build for the government or receive a position at Berlin University, but there'll be other work,

³⁷ See the unpublished memoirs of Louise Mendelsohn: Louise Mendelsohn, *My Life in a Changing World*. I thank Adina Hoffman for making the memoirs available to me.

³⁸ See Irina Grigorieva, "Erich Mendelsohns Wirken als Architekt in der Sowjetunion," (master's thesis, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2003), http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/421/1/Grigorieva_Irina_Mendelsohn.pdf (accessed August 9, 2015).

³⁹ Mendelsohn, *My Life in a Changing World*, 105.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 107.

⁴¹ Rosenstock, "Exodus 1933–1939," 373.

⁴² SchA 835/3.

and of course we'll continue to be his clients.”⁴³ Yet Salman Schocken, with his wealth and network, had something of a safety net to fall back on, while Mendelsohn and many others did not have the same sort of security.⁴⁴

Schocken's private affairs, including his houses, his library and other non-business-related endeavors, were professionally managed by a number of people: secretaries in Zwickau, Berlin and Jerusalem dealt with his mail and travel arrangements, a librarian was hired for the book collection, and the centralized administration of the department stores in Zwickau ensured that qualified and knowledgeable personnel were at hand to deal with every problem that arose. In terms of organization, his private life did not differ from his business life. Without this professional organizational structure, and without Schocken's broad and diverse network, the export of the library would hardly have been feasible.

Four people were mainly responsible for transferring the library. In Germany the transfer was arranged by Dr. Ernst Cohn, Schocken's private secretary in Berlin, and Elise Pelz, an employee of the central office in Zwickau, who was in charge of organizing the shipping of the library; at the Palestine end it was handled by Abraham Meir Habermann, curator of Schocken's library in Zwickau, and, after his emigration, Schocken's librarian in Jerusalem and research assistant at the Institute for the Research of Jewish Poetry. The fourth person was Salman Schocken himself, who made the final decision on every question. Theodor Schocken, who remained in Germany, also played a minor role, as did Dr. Siegfried Moses, chairman of the ZVfD and former director of the Schocken department store in Zwickau. In the 1930s, Moses still acted as Schocken's lawyer and dealt with Schocken's blocked bank accounts and the problem of insurance.⁴⁵

⁴³ Mendelsohn, *My Life in a Changing World*, 103.

⁴⁴ For the emigration of Jews from Germany after 1933, see also: Juliane Wetzel, “Auswanderung aus Deutschland,” in *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945: Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (München: C.H. Beck, 1993), 412–498.

⁴⁵ Siegfried Moses held an important position in the German Jewish Zionist organisations, as he was not only chairman of the ZVfD but also managing director of Ha'avara. He migrated to Palestine in 1937. As early as 1944, he published an article on the question of reconciliation pertaining to the legal claim of Jews against Germany. The essay, published in German with an English translation, offered a systematic legal examination of the issue of post-war Jewish claims. Siegfried Moses, *Jewish Post-War Claims* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Olej Merkaz Europa, 1944). After the defeat of Hitler's Germany and the founding of the State of Israel, Moses acted as Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the United Restitution Institute, and played an important role in the restitution of Jewish property. Whether his legal counselling for Schocken during the rescue operation of the library had any influence on his later work cannot be divulged from the available literature. A thorough analysis of his private letters (held at the Central Zio-

Cohn, Pelz and Habermann were faced with a fair number of problems when dealing with the library. First of all, not all the books were stored in one place. Most of the books were located in Schocken's Berlin home in Zehlendorf, but several crates were still in Zwickau, another two crates were in Marienbad, and the most valuable objects were kept in Swiss bank vaults.⁴⁶ Adding to this problem, Schocken frequently requested specific books to be sent to Jerusalem or brought to him when he was traveling. Considering how widely the objects were scattered, it seems almost a miracle that there was hardly any confusion and not a single copy was lost. When in charge of the library in Germany, Habermann compiled a card index in which all books were systematically recorded. When he left for Palestine, his successors continued his work. When it finally came to the shipping, the card index also assumed legal importance, since the British custom of ports requested a detailed declaration of contents for the crates. Once again, Schocken's system of complete control through centralization, standardization and filing information with scrupulous precision was resoundingly vindicated.⁴⁷

The export of the complete library was conducted in three stages: (1) the books Schocken requested to be sent before the main shipment; (2) the very valuable manuscripts and first prints that were stored in Switzerland; and finally (3) the main shipment expedited at the end of 1935.

The individual shipments commenced almost immediately after the Schocken family left Berlin. On October 26, 1933, the first twelve crates containing only books were sent from Berlin to Jerusalem.⁴⁸ The exact contents of the first shipment were apparently unrecorded. Only a few days later the second shipment left Berlin. It contained typewriters, some furniture, and books and manuscripts, among the latter the *Machsor Korfu*.⁴⁹ Whereas in the first year after Schocken's emigration books were dispatched to Jerusalem rather haphazardly, this changed in October 1934, when Schocken determined the first sets of parameters for future shipments: the books should always be declared as "old and used"; no more than one box a day should be sent; and insurance fees

nist Archives in Jerusalem) and papers might provide an answer to this question. On his work for Ha'avara, see the article by Ludwig Pinner, and on his contribution to restitution claims see the articles of Norman Bentwich, Schalom Adler-Rudel, Walter Schwarz, and Felix Elieser Shinnar in: *In zwei Welten: Siegfried Moses zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Hans Tramer (Tel Aviv: Bitan Ltd., 1962).

⁴⁶ SchA 871/72.

⁴⁷ See Schocken, "Salman Schocken," 18; Siegfried Moses, "Salman Schocken – His Economic and Zionist Activities," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book V* (1960): 73–104, 74.

⁴⁸ SchA 871/52.

⁴⁹ Firma Caro und Jellinek to H. Brody, 2 November 1933, SchA 871/52.

should be paid in *Sperrmark* (blocking marks).⁵⁰ These orders were the starting point for the systematic export of the complete library.

On October 17, 1934, Cohn met with Ernst Hoffmann, who was in charge of collecting and purchasing books and sending them from Europe to the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem, to enquire about dispatching large shipments of books.⁵¹ The main points of discussion included the problems of finding the right type of crate, insurance, routes and transportation fees. These questions were constantly debated until the books were finally shipped. Even as the preparations for the main export continued, Cohn and Pelz were still sending individual crates from Germany to Palestine up to early September 1935.

In retrospect, it appears that the individual shipments served as test runs for the main export. As each fresh consignment was sent, new problems arose. The lengthy line of communication between Germany and Palestine and changing import and export regulations rendered the process complicated and tiresome for the people involved. In May 1935, for example, the director's office of the Department of Customs, Excise & Trade in Haifa changed its regulations⁵² once again, and the Schocken office in Jerusalem was unable to collect the crates because they lacked the necessary documents. Any delay at customs resulted in extra fees, since the goods had to be stored at the port.⁵³ However, additional costs had to be avoided, since many of Schocken's assets were blocked in Germany. The dispute between Berlin and Jerusalem resulted in a set of regulations concerning the shipment of books being issued by the Schocken office in Jerusalem.

The import of used books that belonged to the recipient was free of duty, provided that all necessary documents were presented when clearing customs. Instead of an invoice, two copies of a detailed list of content had to be sent by airmail to arrive before the ship docked. Additionally, the consignment note had to be sent to an appointed address. Furthermore, all payments had to be made in Germany in order to avoid any costs in Palestine.⁵⁴ Whereas the release of *Sperrmark* for payments in Palestine was a complicated business and was not always successful, payments in Germany were always granted by the *Devisenstelle*.⁵⁵ In May 1935, Schocken entered into negotiations with representatives of

50 Pelz to Cohn, 10 October and 15 October 1934, SchA 871/52.

51 Meeting protocol, 17 October 1934, SchA 871/52.

52 Director's Office, Department of Customs, Government of Palestine to A.M. Habermann, c/o Salmann Schocken, 21 May 1935, in: SchA 871/52.

53 Romann to Cohn, 9 May and 30 May 1935, SchA 871/52.

54 Richtlinien für den Versand nach Palästina, 9 May 1935.

55 See below for more details.

the *Devisenstelle* in Leipzig concerning the import of building materials for the planned construction of the library and his private home in Jerusalem. They agreed on a 50% payment in *Sperrmark* provided that Schocken paid the remaining 50% in foreign currency.⁵⁶ In Germany Schocken was allowed to pay the full amount in *Sperrmark*. Given the heavy loss incurred by making payments in Palestine, the Jerusalem office did everything to avoid this.

The above-mentioned new regulations for the import of goods to Mandatory Palestine could have had dire consequences for the future shipments of books. With immediate effect, the British authorities required an official invoice form for all goods imported from Germany, which had to be issued by the German Chamber of Commerce.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, it appears that this regulation did not hinder the export of the library. We may assume that the German authorities issued the official papers without much ado.

Meanwhile, the planning of the main shipment was advancing steadily. The German library in Zehlendorf was packed up by the beginning of December 1934.⁵⁸ In March 1935 the first part of the Jewish and Hebrew library was packed,⁵⁹ followed by the second part in August.⁶⁰ During the course of September, the Schocken office requested offers from shipping⁶¹ and insurance companies. The looming threat of war⁶² drove Schocken to urge Cohn to speed up the final preparations. His main concern was that the insurance companies would either refuse to grant insurance or raise their fees.⁶³ Cohn and Pelz complied, but found that the library could not be shipped from Trieste, Italy, as Schocken had requested, but had to take the longer route from Hamburg.⁶⁴ Since the staff was already experienced in dealing with the German and British authorities, official permission for export from Germany, authorization for payment and clearance at the German port posed no greater difficulty than clearing the boxes

⁵⁶ Bericht für Herrn Schocken, Heinze an Salman Schocken, Theodor Schocken, Kaufmann, Goldmann, 9 May 1935, SchA 823.

⁵⁷ Schocken office Jerusalem to Cohn, 30 May 1935, SchA 871/52.

⁵⁸ Moses to Präsident des Landesfinanzamtes, Leipzig, 8 December 1934, SchA 871/52.

⁵⁹ Bericht, 3 April 1935, SchA 871/52.

⁶⁰ Bestellung Kisten, 17 August 1935, SchA 871/52.

⁶¹ Johannes Beermann is currently working on his dissertation project on the role of German freight forwarders in the theft of Jewish property in Germany during the Nazi period. He presented his preliminary results at the international conference: "Dispossession: The Plundering of German Jewry 1933–1945 and Beyond," Boston University, November 9–11, 2014.

⁶² He was no doubt concerned by the war between Italy and its colony Ethiopia (October 1935 to May 1936). Schocken wanted his library to be shipped from Italy and was afraid that insurance companies would not insure the freight in case of war.

⁶³ 21 September 1935, SchA 871/52.

⁶⁴ Call log Schwabe and Cohn, 10 October 1935, SchA 871/52.

in Haifa. However, due to heavy rain the wooden crates could not be transported immediately to Jerusalem because of the risk that the water would harm the valuable books.

The export of the library was a time-consuming and rather expensive endeavor. The packing and shipping of the 164 crates alone amounted to RM 4730,⁶⁵ not including the hours worked by Cohn, Pelz and Habermann.

In 1936, some of the books and manuscripts stored in Switzerland were sent together with Schocken's Picasso, Monet, Chagall and Renoir paintings.⁶⁶ A further consignment, containing mainly the private books of Lilly Schocken and the children, was dispatched from Germany when the Schocken household was transported.⁶⁷ Boxes kept arriving in Jerusalem until June 1939. In 1938, Theodor Schocken prepared his emigration and had his own books shipped together with his private belongings.⁶⁸ Some of the crates also contained new purchases, as Salman Schocken continued to work on his collection. In short, what began in 1933 and 1934 as an uncoordinated shipment of books turned into a major operation to rescue Jewish cultural property.

The initial phase cannot be understood as implying that Schocken was thinking of an eventual return to Germany, or that he ever considered leaving his library behind. All of Schocken's endeavors were well planned and aimed at avoiding unforeseen problems and costs. As Siegfried Moses writes:

The system of scrutinizing extensively all premises and possible consequences before each important decision and action, has no doubt essentially contributed to Salman Schocken's great success. [...] The object of this system was at any given time to control in full measure any specific spiritual or factual sphere, as well as the pro and contra to precede any decision, and a continuous analytical examination in the course of each important action, be it large or small.⁶⁹

In conclusion, meticulous planning combined with the structure of the Schocken *Konzern* facilitated the successful export of the library. The professionalism

⁶⁵ The equivalent of EUR 17,028 (2006). According to the *Deutsche Bundesbank*, the spending power (consumer price index) of one RM equals EUR 3.60 in January 2006. See Folker Schmerbach, *Das "Gemeinschaftslager Hanns Kerrl" für Referendare in Jüterbog 1933–1945* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 165, 174n.

⁶⁶ Bibliothek und Sammlungen, Verwaltung, SchA 871/72. A few manuscripts and books remained in a vault of the Swiss Bank Union in Zürich and in the Union des Banques Suisses in Geneva. Note Salman Schocken, 29 September 1940, SchA 871/79.

⁶⁷ Several letters and lists, September and October 1936, SchA 871/52; Letter Abteilung Export to Baumeister Heinze, 22 October 1936, SchA 823 (55/5; 6).

⁶⁸ List of books in Theodor Schocken's lift, 5 May 1937, SchA 871/52.

⁶⁹ Moses, "Salman Schocken – His Economic and Zionist Activities," 74.

displayed by the employees involved lent the undertaking the air of an export enterprise rather than a rescue operation.

When the Mendelsohn-designed library building was completed in 1936, on the border between the Jerusalem neighborhoods Rehavia and Talbieh, and the books were finally placed on the new shelves (also imported from Germany),⁷⁰ it enabled numerous scholars, mainly refugees from Germany, to continue their research.

III. The Schocken Library in Jerusalem during the 1930s

As Rakefet Sela-Sheffy points out in her article on German-Jewish immigration to Palestine and the question of culture retention, the immigrant's experience of estrangement in Palestine can be understood as a case of identity negotiation. There are many stories and anecdotes about the German Jews' "culture shock on encountering the life in Palestine, which was allegedly characterized by non-modern public service, poor hygiene, non-professional standards, lack of finesse and good taste [...]. [T]he local patterns [...] clashed with their deeply internalized German-bourgeois habitus [...]." ⁷¹ The process of immigration of German Jews in Palestine/Israel was indeed difficult,⁷² but the strategies employed were far more nuanced than what is implied by the stereotypical images found in *Yekke* anecdotes. Scholars of migration have shown that retaining their tradition and culture in the early years after immigration is a common strategy among immigrants. Cultural reproduction can prevent ruptures set off by (forced) migration, and thus the adherence of German Jews to their cultural repertoire and habitus should be understood in this context rather than interpreted as a snobbish dismissal of *yishuv* culture. The transfer of culture (and here I refer to culture as defined by Edward Burnett Tyler, namely "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any

⁷⁰ The shelving system was ordered from Wolf Netter & Jacoby, a German company that specialized in library furniture. Liste der Exportsendungen für die Bibliothek bis 31.3.37, 9 June 1937, SchA 823.

⁷¹ Rakefet Sela-Sheffy, "'Europeans in the Levant' Revisited – German Jewish Immigrants in 1930s Palestine and the Question of Culture Retention," in *Deutsche(s) in Palästina und Israel: Alltag, Kultur, Politik*, ed. José Brunner, (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 40–59, 43.

⁷² See Michael Dak, "Israelis aus Not: Über die unsanfte Landung im Lande der Verheissung," in *Zweimal Heimat: Die Jeckes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nahost*, eds. Moshe Zimmermann and Yotam Hotam (Frankfurt a. M.: Beerenverlag, 2005), 125–131.

other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”)⁷³ was a means to overcome the travails of emigration, in our case the forced emigration from Germany.⁷⁴ In recent years, a number of research projects, conferences and publications have dealt with aspects of cultural transfer in the context of the fifth *Aliyah*. Theatre, eating habits, social behavior, but also everyday items and books were taken into exile.

The German-Jewish book collections brought to Mandate Palestine/Israel embodied European intellectual traditions and diasporic culture. From their owners and users’ perspective they signified the continuity and stability of these values, regardless of their new environment and in spite of the collapse of the ideals of Jewish acculturation. However, the Schocken library consisted not only of the German collection but also included the previously mentioned Hebraica and Judaica collections. It is therefore instructive to ask what this library, both the institution itself and its collections, represented, and how it was perceived in the eyes of their owner and users. A library is a distinct space in the urban and cultural landscape. It is a place that seeks to

[...] enclose the world on its shelves. It constitutes an isolated universe, cut off from the outside world, but at the same time in this closed and seemingly peaceful place, this external world reflects an external world which is spiritualized, sanitized and so it seems cleansed from temporal dirt, but yet alive.⁷⁵

It is this world, constituted by architecture, by books and by humans, that is addressed in the second section of this paper.

IV. A German house in Jerusalem

Shortly after arriving in Jerusalem, Schocken contacted the architect Erich Mendelsohn⁷⁶ to draw up plans for the new Schocken family home, as well as for a library building. When the library was opened in late 1936 it was one of the most modern buildings in Jerusalem. For example, it was the first house in Jerusalem to have an air-conditioner, and Salman Schocken’s study could be

⁷³ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1871).

⁷⁴ Half of all the articles in *Zweimal Heimat*, eds. Zimmermann and Hotam, deal with examples of “migrating culture.”

⁷⁵ Emilien Carassus, “Bibliothèque-Fiction,” *Littératures: Études de littérature moderne* 11 (1984): 97–105, 99.

⁷⁶ Erich Mendelsohn had built three of the Schocken department stores in Germany: Nuremberg (1925–1926), Stuttgart (1926–1928), Chemnitz (1927–1930).

cooled in the hot summer months and heated in winter. The system, which was produced by the Lufttechnische Gesellschaft GmbH, Stuttgart, cost RM 10,460⁷⁷ and was shipped from Hamburg in January 1936.⁷⁸ Apart from the Jerusalem limestone, most of the materials were imported directly from Germany, as was most of the furniture.

Schocken was a very demanding client. He wanted only the best and refused to settle for anything below the standards to which he was accustomed in Europe. Thus, most of the building materials – cement, wood, window glass, doorframes, screws, light-switches, etc. – were imported from Germany.⁷⁹ All technical equipment, such as stoves, boilers, lamps, and the famous air conditioner, as well as furniture was ordered from Germany. Even the plants, flowers, bushes and trees for the private home, and the berry bushes and herbs for the library's garden were shipped from Germany.⁸⁰

However, buying goods in Germany and exporting them to Palestine also enabled Schocken to save at least part of his fortune. When Schocken left Germany, not only did he lose his citizenship, but his assets were frozen as well. Owing to the Great Depression and war reparations repayments, the Weimar Republic restricted free movement of capital in order to prevent the flight of capital. International payments were not permitted and the purchase of foreign currency was severely restricted.⁸¹ On October 8, 1931, the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (Reich Flight Tax)⁸² was implemented as a control measure in order to curtail the drain of capital from the country. Upon departure from Germany, everyone with assets exceeding RM 200,000 or a yearly income over RM 20,000 was obliged to pay a 25% tax. From 1933 onward the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* was misemployed to expropriate Jewish refugees who were driven out of their homeland. The decree assessing *Reichsfluchtsteuer* was revised in May 1934, and the exemption on taxable assets was lowered to RM 50,000.⁸³ Henceforth, the tax was no longer a means to protect the German economy but had become a means of “legally”

⁷⁷ The equivalent of EUR 43,723 (January 2014).

⁷⁸ Exportmeldung, Schocken Aktiengesellschaft Zwickau to Salman Schocken, Jerusalem, 24 January 1936, SchA 823.

⁷⁹ Privates, Häuser, Jerusalem, SchA 823.

⁸⁰ Several orders and plans for the gardens, SchA 823 (58/3; F-H).

⁸¹ For further details, see for instance: Michael Ebi, “Devisenrecht und Aussenhandel,” in *Wirtschaftskontrolle und Recht in der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur*, ed. Dieter Goswinkel (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 2005), 181–198.

⁸² For details see: Dorothee Mussnug, *Die Reichsfluchtsteuer 1931–1953: Schriften zur Rechtsgeschichte* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993).

⁸³ Susanne Meinel and Jutta Zwilling, *Legalisierter Raub: Die Ausplünderung der Juden im Nationalsozialismus durch die Reichsfinanzverwaltung in Hessen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2004).

robbing Jewish refugees. Even upon payment of the tax, Jews were generally not permitted to leave the country with their property. The foreign currency allowance was limited to RM 10 and bank deposits and other holdings were frozen. Funds could only be transferred after payment of exorbitant penalties.⁸⁴

Schocken tried to salvage as many of his assets as possible. Since transferring money directly from Germany to Palestine was too costly, he opted on the one hand for *Ha'avara* transfers⁸⁵ and on the other hand for the import of goods from Germany. Having his house and library constructed with material from Germany and furnished with German products was thus a way to salvage some of his wealth. In early summer 1935, Schocken's employees and lawyers began negotiating with representatives of *Ha'avara* as well as with officials of the exchange control office (*Devisenstelle*)⁸⁶ in Germany with the aim of securing the best terms possible.

On May 8, 1935, one of Schocken's lawyers – the signature on the document is blurred – wrote to the president of the *Landesfinanzamt* in Leipzig to ask if Schocken could be permitted to purchase building material in Germany worth

84 January 1934: 20%; August 1934: 65%; October 1936: 81%; June 1938: 90%; September 1939: 96%. See Frank Bajohr, “Arisierung als gesellschaftlicher Prozess,” in *Demokratisierung der Demokratie: Diagnosen und Reformvorschläge*, ed. Claus Offe (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2003), 21.

85 The *Ha'avara* Agreement was designed to facilitate the emigration of German Jews to Palestine. The basis for the agreement was the idea of selling German goods to Palestine. It was highly controversial, not only because international Jewish organizations joined in a boycott of German goods but primarily because official representatives of the Zionist movement decided at the Zionist Congress of 1935 that the Jewish Agency would be charged with negotiating a transfer agreement with Nazi officials. The Zionists argued that saving Jewish life was far more important than the economic boycott of Germany. The agreement served all parties involved: Germany exported goods, the *yishuv* gained much needed capital, and the Jewish emigrants were able to salvage at least a part of their assets. The prospective emigrants paid the amounts to be transferred into the account of *Paltreu* (Palästina Treuhandstelle zur Beratung deutscher Juden), a Jewish trust company. The money was then used for the purchase of goods in Germany, which the *Ha'avara* sold in Palestine. The proceeds were paid in Palestinian currency to the emigrants now already living in Palestine. For further details, see Werner Feilchenfeld, Dolf Michaelis and Ludwig Pinner, *Haavara-Transfer nach Palästina und Einwanderung deutscher Juden 1933–1939* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1972). For a critical view of the agreement see, among others, Yfaat Weiss, “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Movement: A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 129–171.

86 The *Devisenstelle* itself played a major role in plundering Jewish property. See Walter Franke, “Die Rolle der Devisenstelle bei der Enteignung der Juden,” in *Vor der Vernichtung: Die staatliche Enteignung der Juden im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Katharina Stengel (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2007), 80–93.

RM 130,000 to 150,000 with his frozen assets (*Sperrmark*).⁸⁷ After several meetings they agreed on a 50% deal, meaning that Schocken was allowed to pay half of his expenses in *Sperrmark* if the other half was paid either in foreign currency or in free *Reichsmark*.⁸⁸ At the same time, Schocken's people in Palestine began negotiations with *Ha'avara*. First of all, the *Ha'avara* was asked to approve the import of German goods to Palestine, which it promptly did.⁸⁹ But Schocken, who had an account with *Ha'avara* as well, wished to pay for certain orders from Germany with *Ha'avara* Marks. After protracted wrangling between *Ha'avara* officials and Schocken,⁹⁰ his representatives managed to negotiate special deals.⁹¹ During the construction of the two houses in Jerusalem, Schocken alternated between the different methods of payment, sometimes even combining them.

The outcome was two buildings, one for the family home and one for the books. From the outside, both blended perfectly with the oriental landscape of Jerusalem; but on the inside, they included all the European comforts. The house and the library truly brought a piece of Germany to Jerusalem – literally and figuratively. The library, built from German material, furnished with German furniture and comprising books collected in Germany, became a meeting place for German emigrants. It hosted readings and academic lectures for a German audience. The Schocken library building became an extraterritorial home for the German émigrés in Jerusalem.

Shortly after its inauguration, the Schocken library on Balfour Street became a centre for research, lectures and public events. The Schocken Institute for the Research of Hebrew Poetry had its offices in the library building. The Institute was founded back in Germany, and moved to Jerusalem at the same time as the Schocken family. The relocation to Jerusalem did not keep its director Chaim Heinrich Brody⁹² and his two assistants Chaim Jefim Schir-

⁸⁷ Letter, 8 May 1935, SchA 823.

⁸⁸ Genehmigungsbescheid, 22 January 1936, SchA 823.

⁸⁹ Besprechung zwischen Herrn David, Herrn Baumeister Heinze und Herrn Gustav Schocken, 26 June 1935, SchA 823.

⁹⁰ It would be beyond the scope of this paper to dwell on Schocken's professional criticism of certain *Ha'avara* policies. Relevant documents can be found in: SchA 535/61.

⁹¹ Unfortunately, these sources are not accessible in the SchA.

⁹² Brody was considered a leading expert in Hebrew poetry of the Middle Ages, and his scholarly work is still considered a standard of the field. See Ittai Josphe Tamari, *Das Volk der Bücher: Eine Bücherreise durch sechs Jahrhunderte jüdischen Lebens*, Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur in Bayern (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012), 174 f.; "Brody, Heinrich (R. Salomonsohn, Chaim Brody)," in *Handbuch österreichischer Autorinnen und Autoren jüdischer Herkunft 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (München: K. G. Saur, 2002), 1:173–174.

mann⁹³ and Menachem Zulay⁹⁴ from their work. They persisted in their tasks and research, publishing books and articles both in Germany and in Palestine. This example indicates continuation rather than rupture through migration. The Schocken library and the Hebrew collection enabled researchers to continue their work.

The lecture evenings and social events in the library represent the continuation of German intellectual life in Palestine. The files in the Schocken Archive bear witness to the German character of these events. The lecturers were, with a few exceptions, scholars who had themselves emigrated from Germany; the same is true of the audience. The language and the social etiquette were German, as was the porcelain crockery on which the food was served at the receptions following the talks. With his library, Schocken created a German space for himself but also for his circle of friends – scholars, writers and other academically affiliated German-Jewish émigrés. The question as to whether he did this mainly for himself or for the sake of his German legacy must remain open. However, it is striking that Jerusalem served merely as his part-time home. He spent most of his time in Europe, taking care of his business and publishing house.

The German intellectuals who frequented the Schocken library might have created a German space within the city of Jerusalem; yet this did not mean that they excluded themselves from *yishuv* life. Schocken himself was present as the owner and editor of the Hebrew daily *Haaretz*, and in 1935, he was elected Chairman of the Executive Council of the Hebrew University. The readers and visitors to the library were equally engaged in the building of a Jewish society in Mandate Palestine. They were writers, professors, representatives of Zionist organizations, publishers and teachers, and by virtue of their professional knowledge, skills and work ethos were considered important actors in the nation-building process.⁹⁵ Rehavia⁹⁶ and the Schocken library were distinct cultur-

⁹³ In 1937 Schirmann was invited as a guest lecturer and in 1952 was appointed Professor of Medieval Hebrew Poetry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For a short academic biography, see Isaac E. Barzilay, “Hayyim (Jefim) Schirmann (1904–1981),” in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 49 (1982), xxv–xxxi.

⁹⁴ Zulay, who was hired in 1925 as the Hebrew teacher for Salman Schocken’s children, worked at the Schocken Institute, where he studied early Eretz Israel puyyit, from its foundation until his death. “Zulay Menahem,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 21: 683.

⁹⁵ See Sela-Sheffy, “‘Europeans in the Levant’ Revisited,” 51.

⁹⁶ For a short description of Rehavia in the 1930s see Christian Kraft, *Aschkenas in Jerusalem: Die religiösen Institutionen der Einwanderer aus Deutschland im Jerusalemer Stadtviertel Rechavia (1933–2004) – Transfer und Transformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 15–22.

al spaces within the developing urban landscape and *yishuv* culture. The library served as a place in which to keep German culture and heritage alive, a sanctuary in difficult times. Yet it was not a static place of commemoration but rather a dynamic location of scholarship and discussion, where new research projects were initiated on the basis of the books and manuscripts salvaged from Germany.

V. The transfer of the Schocken library: A special case of rescuing cultural property. A summary and an outlook

By transferring his private library from Germany to Palestine in 1934–35, Salman Schocken rescued not only a Jewish book collection of great cultural value but also salvaged his collection of valuable German classics. Under the roof of the library, centuries-old traditional texts were kept together with one of the most valuable private Goethe collections of its time.⁹⁷ At the time of the shipment, neither Schocken nor his employees could know that they were rescuing Jewish cultural goods that would have been looted, dispersed or even destroyed by the Nazis. The transport of private German book collections to Palestine as parts of the personal belongings of refugees has been studied, as has the history of the rescue of German Jewish cultural property after 1945, examples of which are mentioned above. The rescue of precious and important private Hebrew book collections before they were looted by the Nazis has thus far remained in the shadows. This was probably because there are not many such collections, and – as always – because of the difficulty of finding sources that shed light on these stories. The case of the Schocken library can help us understand the magnitude of the efforts necessary to successfully transfer a library of this size. Without a professional network, experience in dealing with both the German and British authorities and unlimited funds, an operation such as the shipment of the Schocken library would not have been possible.

The salvage of Nazi-looted book collections after the Second World War by a group of prominent German-Jewish intellectuals of the Hebrew University, as described in Gallas' study, shows the importance attributed to these books: they

⁹⁷ For the German collection, see the auction catalogues from the late 1970s and early 2000s.

were considered vessels of memory, relics of a destroyed past.⁹⁸ During the 1930s and 1940s, the Schocken library represented a past that was being destroyed. The library, constructed with German building materials and fitted with furniture imported from the former home, constituted a sanctuary for German émigrés; but it was also a place that functioned within the context of the *yishuv*. Schocken did not intend to build a place of segregation, but sought to influence the formation of a new society. The outbreak of World War II, however, brought a temporary halt to the many events held in the library. During the 1940s the library building (as well as the private home) was protected by the American Consulate, which flew its flag over the buildings;⁹⁹ nevertheless, it was decided that the most valuable books would be sent to South Africa.¹⁰⁰

Schocken himself left Palestine together with his wife in 1941 and settled in the United States. He had previously visited the United States in 1940, on behalf of the Hebrew University. As Chairman of the Executive Council, he was charged with raising funds for the financially troubled university. He met with various groups and delivered numerous lectures about his vision of the university's future.¹⁰¹ In October 1941, he and his wife set out on their second trip to the States, again on behalf of the university, but this time they would not return to Palestine. In a private conversation with Hugo Bergmann shortly before their departure, Schocken confessed that he felt like an outsider in Jerusalem, that in pre-Hitler Germany the government had time and again sought his counsel,¹⁰² whereas in Palestine he was simply considered a wealthy man, and hence was asked for money but not for advice. Yet he did not conceal the fact that he was eager to get to know America better.¹⁰³ Schocken's disappointment at his lack of influence in Palestine, together with the fact that after the war broke out he was completely cut off from Europe, probably led to his decision to live in the

98 Elisabeth Gallas, “Materialisiertes Gedächtnis – Zur Rettung und Verteilung geraubter jüdischer Bücher nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg,” *Exilforschung: Ein internationales Jahrbuch* 31 (2013): 215–227, 225.

99 Letter Kurt Wilhelm to Gustav Schocken, 7 May 1943, SchA 823/33.

100 See SchA 871/73.

101 SchA 074/223.

102 Schocken was a member and chairman of professional associations such as the German Department Store Association and the Union of German Retail Trade. For details, see Moses, “Salman Schocken – His Economic and Zionist Activities,” 83. He might have referred to these functions in his conversation with Bergmann. Other than this I have no knowledge of him having counselled the German government.

103 Letter Hugo Bergmann to Luise Bergmann, 10 October 1941, in: *Schmuel Hugo Bergmann: Tagebücher und Briefe: 1901–1948*, ed. Miriam Sambursky (Königstein/TS: Jüdischer Verlag Athenäum, 1985), 1: 540.

United States. However, other than Bergmann's account to his wife of his private conversation with Salman Schocken, there are no sources that shed light on this matter.

The Schocken Library is still located in the Mendelsohn building on Balfour Street in Jerusalem, but it now belongs to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS). The collection as a whole, however, did not survive Schocken's death in 1959. The German books, as well as parts of the Hebrew collections, were sold by the family in auctions.¹⁰⁴ According to Silke Schaeper, who worked in the Schocken Library in the 1990s, Salman Schocken was well aware that the German collection had no future in Israel, and began to sell selected sections of it in the 1950s. After his death, his heirs sold the German books, the German autographs and the greater part of the art collection. Salman Schocken's final will lacked concrete instructions concerning the library; it was eventually sold to the JTS. Prior to the transaction, the heirs set aside 600 volumes of Hebraica as well as the incunabula collection. The State of Israel tried to prevent these books from being sold. Israel's Antiques Authority Law prohibits unique cultural property from leaving the country. Following prolonged legal proceedings, the parties agreed that the National Library of Israel was to select books for its collection prior to the public auctions. At three auctions (1993, 2003 and 2005),¹⁰⁵ valuable and rare books and manuscripts from the Schocken collection were sold.¹⁰⁶ The majority of the collection, as well as Mendelsohn's library building, however, are still accessible to the public today.

104 *Die Bibliotheken Salman Schocken und Karl Wolfskehl: Auktion Dr. Ernst Hausedewell & Ernst Nolte, Antiquariat und Aktionshaus*, 2 Teile, vol. 208 (Hamburg: E. Hausedewell & E. Nolte, 1975–1976), auction catalogue.

105 Auction catalogues: *Important Hebrew Manuscripts from the Salman Schocken Collection* (New York: Christie's, 2005); *Important Hebrew Books from the Library of the Late Salman Schocken: Catalogue of auction held in London on Monday, 6th December, 1993* (London: Sotheby's, 1993); *Catalogue of important Hebrew printed books from the library of the late Salman Schocken (1877–1959: To be offered for sale by auction on Tuesday, 2nd June, 2003* (New York: Kestenbaum & Co., 2003).

106 Silke Schaeper, "Goldadern wertvollen jüdischen Lebens. Salman Schocken und seine Hebraica-Sammlung," in *Jüdische Almanach 1995*, ed. Jakob Hessing (Frankfurt a. M.: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkampverlag, 1994), 121–135, 134 f.